

Message Text

PAGE 01 TEGUCI02112 211926Z

21

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 L-02 H-02

SCS-03 /062 W

----- 130126

R 211700Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 119

INFO DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2112

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH TELA RAILROAD OFFICIALS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2081, TEGUCIGALPA 2066 AND TEGUCIGALPA 2044

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSTATIONS WITH HOUSTON LACOMBE, GENERAL
MANAGER, TELA RAILROAD, UNITED BRANDS ATTORNEY FROM BOSTON,
SKELLY, AND LOCAL ATTORNEY MONCADA, MAY 20, ECONOFF COVERED
CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND OBTAINED COMPANY VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INDICATED REFTELS, DEVELOPMENTS ON LEGAL ELEMENTS
OF BRIBERY CASE HAVE DOMINATED PRESS. TELA RR VIEW IS THAT
PROCURADOR (ATTORNEY GENERAL) CANNOT TAKE TELA RR INTO BRIBERY
PROCEEDINGS SINCE TELA RR NOT MENTIONED IN INVESTIGATORY
COMMISSION REPORT ALTHOUGH UNITED BRANDS WAS. UNITED BRANDS
HAS NO LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE IN HONDURAS. IN ANY EVENT,
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEGUCI02112 211926Z

TELA RR HAS NOTHING TO TELL THE COURT OTHER THAN IT HAD NO
PART IN THE BRIBERY CASE. IF TELA RR IS BROUGHT TO COURT ON
SOME ACCUSATIONS, LOCAL ATTORNEY MONCADA MAINTAINS THAT THE
COMPANY WILL BE UNABLE TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT WHICH WILL BE

USEFUL TO THE PROCURADOR. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF CALLED AS A WITNESS, THE COMPANY CAN STATE ITS POSITION THAT IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE AFFAIR.

2. ON THE SECOND LEGAL QUESTION FACING THE COMPANY, THE DENIAL OF THE RIGHT OF HOUSTON LACOMBE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, LACOMBE STATES THAT HE WAS GIVEN ORAL ASSURANCE BY THE INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WHEN THE COMMISSION HAD PRESENTED ITS REPORT. HOWEVER, AFTER THE REPORT WAS PRESENTED LACOMBE WAS ADVISED BY THE PROCURADOR THAT HE SHOULD NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY. LACOMBE HAD DESIRED TO ATTEND THE GRADUATION OF A CHILD FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN THE STATES AND TO BE WITH HIS WIFE WHO ENTERED A NEW ORLEANS HOSPITAL THIS PAST WEEKEND. HE STATES HE HAS NO DESIRE TO "RUN AWAY" FROM HONDURAS, THAT HE WOULD INTEND TO BE GONE ONLY ABOUT TWO WEEKS, AND THAT HE HAS NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE BRIBERY CASE. WHETHER OR NOT THE PROCURADOR'S PROHIBITION ON LACOMBE'S DEPARTURE IS LEGAL, IT IS EFFECTIVE AND LACOMBE IS NOT FOR THE MOMENT SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM THE EMBASSY TO PERMIT HIS DEPARTURE.

3. THE TELA RR OFFICIALS PRESENT FELT THAT THE INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION REPORT HAD MADE AN ERROR BY CITING UNITED BRANDS AS AN OBJECT FOR CRIMINAL ACTION BUT THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION AS TO HOW THE ERROR COULD BE RECTIFIED. THEY LIKewise FELT THAT THE CASE AGAINST BENNATON IS FOUNDED STRICTLY ON HEARSAY AND THAT THE FEW PERSONS WHO HAVE FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE CASE ARE UNLIKELY TO BE COOPERATIVE DUE TO SELF-INCRIMINATION. THE BANANA COMPANY OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, WERE QUITE AWARE OF THE NEED OF THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT TO COME TO SOME RESOLUTION ON THE ISSUES WHICH IS POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE. LACOMBE INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT THAT HIS IDEA OF COOPERATION DOES NOT INCLUDE SERVING A JAIL TERM. LACOMBE ALSO EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE PROCURADOR, HERNANDEZ, IS ANTAGONISTIC AGAINST THE BANANA COMPANY AND IN NO WAY TO BE TRUSTED.

4. COMMENT: THE BEST TACTICS FOR THE BANANA COMPANY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 02112 211926Z

NOT CLEAR AT THE MOMENT. IT MAY BE THAT THE PROCURADOR WILL NEED TO EXAMINE HIS POSSIBILITIES AND TAKE ACTION BEFORE A BANANA COMPANY RESPONSE CAN BE GENERATED. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS FACED WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF CREATING A LEGAL CASE TO MATCH THE POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS.
SANCHEZ

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, BRIBERY, INVESTIGATIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, RAILROADS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEGUCI02112
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750179-0407
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197505100/baaaaecl.tel
Line Count: 104
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PINT, HO, UNITED BRANDS, TELA, (LACOMBE, HOUSTON), (SKELLY), (MONCADA)
To: STATE INFO DIA
USIA
GUATEMALA
MANAGUA
SAN JOSE
SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006